Some of the issues which either could not be discussed at all during the mini-Ministerial meeting or on which agreement could not be reached were Cotton subsidies, Tariff capping, Tariff simplification, new Tariff Rate Quota creation etc. in agriculture and sectoral initiatives in NAMA. Developing countries also have concerns in other areas of the Doha Round negotiations such as fisheries subsidies, Anti-dumping, Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and its relationship with the convention on bio-diversity, liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services etc.

The multilateral process of discussions has since resumed at the WTO on agriculture and NAMA issues and efforts are on to resolve the outstanding issues so as to achieve a balanced, positive and development-oriented outcome to the Doha Round at the earliest. The Round can only be completed when WTO Members agree on the modalities for Agriculture and NAMA and complete negotiations in all the areas covered under the Doha Work Programme.

India's contribution to Intellectual Property Rights

484. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the recent figures of United Nations Indian patent registry reveal that more than 90,000 applications are received relating to patentable inventions every year;

(b) if so, whether the global campaign to undermine Intellectual Property Rights by vested interests on the plea that Intellectual Property Rights increase the cost of medicines for the world's poor; and

(c) if so, India's support and contribution towards strengthening Intellectual Property Rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) The number of patent applications filed in the Indian patent office in the financial year 2007-2008 is 35,218. Therefore, the information that 90,000 applications are received is factually not correct.

(b) and (c) The intellectual property rights policy in India seeks to balance and calibrate intellectual property protection with public health, national security and public interest concerns. In order to strengthen the intellectual property system in the country, the Government has taken the following initiatives:

(i) A scheme of Modernisation of Intellectual Property offices at a cost of Rs. 153.00 crore was implemented during the ninth and tenth Five Year Plans for infrastructure development, computerization, human resource development and training and awareness.

(ii) Four new integrated Intellectual Property Offices were set up in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai.

(iii) Work for the setting of the National Institute of Intellectual Property Management at Nagpur has commenced.

(iv) E-filing of Patent applications has been made operational with effect from 20th July, 2007.

(v) Seminars/Conferences/Workshops at national and international level have been organized for creating awareness and promotion of Intellectual Property Rights.

(vi) Memoranda of Understanding have been signed between India and Australia, European Patent Office, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States of America for cooperation in the field of Intellectual Property Rights.

(vii) To further strengthen and upgrade the Intellectual Property Offices, the Government has launched a scheme in the Eleventh Five Year Plan for Modernisation and Strengthening of Intellectual Property Offices at an estimated cost of Rs.300 crore.

(viii) The measures taken by the Government enabled the Indian Patent Office to be recognised as an International Searching Authority and International Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty of World Intellectual Property Organisation and a possible accession to the Madrid Protocol for the international registration of Marks.

Exporters opting for Export Credit Guarantee Scheme

485. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our exporters are opting for the Export Credit Guarantee Scheme to minimize their losses due to unforeseen circumstances;

(b) whether any shortcomings have been found in operation of ECG scheme during the last five years; and

(c) if so, the percentage of exporters opting for ECG, especially in the case of small and medium exporters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) As on 31.03.2008, 20568 exporters were availing insurance cover of the Corporation either under the policy issued to them or through the covers issued to commercial banks. More than 80% of these exports were small and medium exporters.

Free trade agreement with ASEAN

486. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has finally concluded a free trade agreement with ASEAN;

(b) if so, the terms of the agreement; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.